

DISCUSS

Discuss the following questions with a partner for at least five minutes.

1. Do you like shopping?
2. Have you ever gone Christmas shopping?
3. When are stores usually the most crowded in your country?

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: You will listen to an article about Black Friday, or one of the busiest shopping days of the year in the US. The article is about four minutes long. Listen only, and don't worry about understanding everything.

Step 2: Look at the questions. Read and understand them, then listen again. As you are listening, try to answer the questions in your head. Don't write the answers yet. Next, listen again and write the answers this time. Compare your answers with a partner.

Step 3: Read the article. Check in your dictionary any unknown words. Now listen again. Can you understand more?

Step 4: Listen! Listen! Listen! Listen to the article on the train or in your free time. Each time you listen, you will slowly improve!

QUESTIONS

Answer the questions to check comprehension. If you don't know an answer, don't worry. Skip it. Then listen again.

1. What is the day just after Thanksgiving called in the US?
2. What happens on that day?
3. Where did the term begin?
4. Why do retailers like Black Friday?
5. The article calls Black Friday a last chance shopping season? What does this mean?
6. The article comments about people who oppose Black Friday. What did they do?
7. Why do they oppose shopping?

the ARTICLE

Black Friday refers to the day just after Thanksgiving in the US. Because so many companies have a four day weekend, many people begin their Christmas shopping on this day. (Thanksgiving always falls on a Thursday in the US, and then people have Friday, Saturday, and Sunday off from work.) Black Friday is often reported as one of the busiest shopping days of the year. Shopping malls are packed with people, parking lots are crowded, and lines at stores are very, very long. Some stores even open at five or six in the morning because there are so many people. Other stores have discounts and sales to draw even more customers.

The word "black" to describe the Friday likely began in Philadelphia in the mid-1960s. Traffic jams filled the roads into the downtown area every year. The stores and sidewalks were overflowing with shoppers. The experience for so many of the people who ventured downtown was stressful and chaotic. It was a terrible, or black, day. Because other cities around the country similarly experienced traffic jams, busy stores, and too many shoppers on the day after Thanksgiving, the term spread. Black Friday became a common idiom in American English.

Although many people may see the day after Thanksgiving negatively, retailers have a very different opinion. It's their best opportunity to improve earnings for the year, and take the business out of the red (loss) and into the black (profit). For example, if sales were slow in the spring, summer, and fall, then the store must attract many customers and make many sales between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The first and most important day of this last chance shopping season is Black Friday.

Of course, there are some people who dislike Black Friday. There are some people who hate the day and its crowds very much. But there are also some people who strongly oppose the shopping day because they believe it harms society. They think that people should consume less and reuse resources more, and so have created a day called "Buy Nothing Day." It falls on the same day as Black Friday, and it encourages people to buy nothing, of course.

However, for most people, Black Friday just presents one more opportunity to go shopping. For those who don't like shopping, then it's one more reason to avoid the stores and shopping malls.



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (optional)

1. Which paragraph was the easiest to listen to? Which paragraph was the most difficult? Look at the vocabulary and sentence structure, then think why one paragraph was easy and another difficult.

2. Listen and write the sentences:

Because so many companies have a four day weekend... (paragraph 1)

It's their best opportunity to improve earnings for the year, and take... (paragraph 3)

But there are also some people who strongly oppose... (paragraph 4)

For those who don't like shopping, then it's... (paragraph 5)

3. After reading the article, what do you think about futurists? Do you agree that it's important to study the future? Please explain.

ANSWERS

QUESTIONS
1. Black Friday refers to the day just after Thanksgiving in the US.
2. Many people begin their Christmas shopping on this day.
3. The word "black" to describe the Friday likely began in Philadelphia in the mid-1960s.
4. It's their best opportunity to improve earnings for the year, and take the business out of the red (loss) and into the black (profit).
5. If sales were slow in the spring, summer, and fall, then the store must attract many customers and make many sales between Thanksgiving and Christmas.
6. They have created a day called "Buy Nothing Day."
7. They think that people should consume less and reuse resources more.
EXTENSION ACTIVITIES - Listen and write the sentences.
1. many people begin their Christmas shopping on this day.
2. the business out of the red (loss) and into the black (profit).
3. the shopping day because they believe it harms society.
4. one more reason to avoid the stores and shopping malls.